

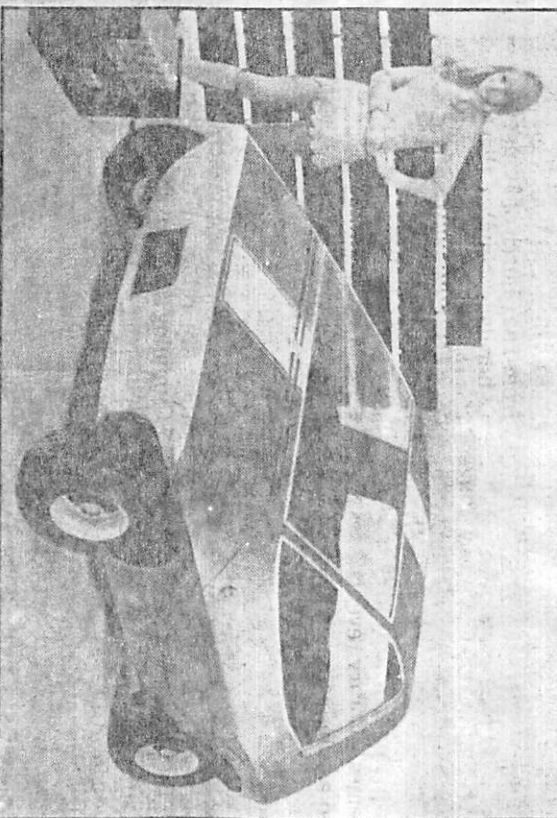
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Futura Propulsion's prototype car, built for research and demonstration purposes, can reach 60 mph in 10 seconds using all "off-the-shelf components," Moriarty said.

With those speeds, electric cars could compete against gasoline-driven machines. The drawback: Both cars can only go 120 miles under ideal conditions on a single 8-hour charge.

Still, the market is there and continuing to approach everyday possibilities. By the end of next year, there may be 1,000 electric vehicles on the streets of Los Angeles, thanks to a joint project by the city Department of Water and Power and Southern California Edison Company. Developers hope to produce as many as 10,000 cars by 1995.

Dubbed the "LA 301," the project car will be designed by Clean Air Transport based in Sweden and reportedly carry four passengers with a top speed of 70 mph



American Motors' Amtron raised interest and hopes in 1967.

and a range of 150 miles between charges.

The LA 301 and others like it may serve to be a good second car for short-distance commuters.

"This vehicle as it sits could meet the needs of thousands of people," Moriarty said of Futura's car.

Options to increase the range of EVs may be to have battery ex-

change programs at service stations or to use hybrid vehicles with both batteries and gasoline engines, as in GM's experimental HX3 five-passenger sedan.

And continuing improvements in technologies may bring long-lasting batteries as well as more efficient components and power supplies.



A parking-meter outlet refuels a 1968 Westinghouse car.

As new technologies continue to arrive, many believe American carmakers have to move quickly if they hope to secure the market in electric cars.

However, some doubt the Big Three's commitment. Moriarty feels the Impact may not arrive until 1996-97, three to four years after GM says it will. Ford and Chrysler each have limited experiments under works.

Meanwhile, as reported in Newsweek, Tokyo Electric Power Co. plans to unveil a prototype electric car powered by nickel-cadmium batteries that should achieve speeds of 110 miles per hour with a range of 310 miles. Nissan is also producing electric car prototypes.

Meyer of Unique Mobility, which announced plans in August to build electric drive trains for BMW electric cars, said, "My opinion is American carmakers will not

get into the electric car market unless they're dragged kicking and screaming."

BMW's car promises to be something to see, Meyer said. "It's a shocker. If you're a car buff, it will absolutely shake your foundation."

With Unique Mobility's patented lightweight drive system, in combination with sodium-sulfur batteries, the car is expected to achieve zero to 53 mph in 18 seconds with a top speed of 80 mph.

It may be marketed in Europe by the mid '90s.

"America does have the capability to make world class products," Moriarty said. "The biggest obstacle is upper management. They are very limited in their ideas and vision.... They're in danger of losing the market to more aggressive foreign markets."